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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

Executive Registry

83-4919/3

October 19, 1983

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Senior Interagency Group No. 40

TO: OVP - Mr. Donald Gregg  
NSC - Mr. Robert Kimmitt  
CIA -   
Defense - Colonel John Stanford  
JCS - LTC Dennis Stanley  
USIA - Ms. Teresa Collins

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SUBJECT: Acción Paper - US and ROK Responses to the  
Rangoon Terrorist Incident

The Rangoon Bombing action paper has been revised in accordance with SIG participants' suggestions, approved, and forwarded to the White House. We are moving ahead on the immediate actions outlined in the paper. Suggestions for additional steps should be sent to the Office of Korean Affairs.

*Cherry*  
Charles Hill  
Executive Secretary

Attachment:

The Rangoon Incident - US and ROK Responses.

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The Rangoon Incident - US and ROK Responses

In the wake of the Rangoon incident we should consult with the ROKG on measures which we can take to support our mutual security interests and the ROK's international position, and, if the evidence warrants, on appropriate measures to take vis-a-vis North Korea. Our objectives are to avoid uncontrolled escalation of tension on the Korean peninsula and to help the ROK sustain and broaden its enhanced international stature by avoiding counter-productive retaliation against the DPRK.

Vigorous US diplomatic action will reassure the ROK of our support and may help thwart Pyongyang's objective of reversing Seoul's recent success in enhancing its international stature. It will also assist President Chun in managing the pressures for retaliation in kind against the North if he can demonstrate that some firm action is being taken. It may also be useful to him domestically to be seen as under pressure from the US to exercise restraint, although there are also possible negative consequences if he is seen as giving in to US pressure without getting something in return from us. Thus, the more we can do to assist the South Koreans in this tragedy, the better able we will be to consult closely with them and keep their reactions within bounds.

Because of the presence of 39,000 US troops in Korea, we are involved. Therefore, we must insist, as Secretary Weinberger made clear to ROK Minister of Defense in the April 1983 Security Consultative Meetings, that the US must be fully consulted on any plans that could affect us.

It must be recognized that pressures on President Chun not to appear weak in the face of terrorism may dictate his response whether or not the US would support it. An assessment of internal pressures being exerted on President Chun must be completed, and up-dated as necessary.

In considering responses to the Rangoon incident, there are steps we can take immediately and others which might be taken after the evidence is in. We must bear in mind that the identification of the assassins may never be confirmed, or may not be made public by the Burmese. This may complicate our efforts to garner international support for steps to be taken in support of the ROK and to condemn the North. For success in these efforts it would be preferable for the public US role to be muted; neither the US nor the ROK should give an appearance of arm-twisting in our approaches to other governments.

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Immediate Bilateral Actions (in Absence of Solid Evidence of North Korean Complicity)

-- The President's letter to President Chun, and Secretary Weinberger's October 13 meeting with him on the day of the memorial service, are clear signs of US support; Secretary Weinberger's visit provided an opportunity to discuss some of the dangers of precipitate retaliatory action and the need for full consultations. If it appears desirable to have further high-level consultations, we should try to enlist someone who is highly respected.

-- In our consultations with the ROKs, we should also emphasize the importance of having solid evidence of North Korean responsibility for the killings and of keeping the Burmese out in front in the international arena.

-- We should encourage Congressional expressions of sympathy and support for the ROK.

-- We should begin consultations with the Japanese on steps they may be prepared to take, such as limits on trade and extension of bank credit, to the DPRK, if North Korean complicity in the assassinations becomes clear.

-- We should begin discussions with our close friends and allies on what might be done to demonstrate support for the ROK (such as high-level visits).

-- While we want to encourage the Burmese government to continue to investigate the incident and disseminate the facts as they obtain them, we must remain careful not to push the Burmese too hard. Our posture should be supportive without being intrusive.

-- We should again urge the Pakistanis to up-grade their relations with the ROK to full diplomatic status; they have told us for over a year that the decision to do so has been made in principle and that it is just a matter of timing. Now is the time for Pakistan to accord full diplomatic recognition to the ROK.

-- Although prospects for Egyptian full recognition of the ROK are somewhat less likely, Cairo does have cordial consular-level relations with Seoul. We should also urge the Egyptians to raise the level of their relations with the ROK now.

-- We should continue to brief the Chinese and Soviets on this situation, and ask that they counsel restraint in Pyongyang.

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Immediate Multilateral Actions in Absence of Solid Evidence of North Korean Complicity)

-- LETTERS TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND UNSC PRESIDENT: We should suggest to Korea and Burma that they send a letter to the Secretary General on the Rangoon incident, to be circulated in the UNGA. We should also suggest that they send a similar letter to the UNSC President (Jordan in October)

-- UNGA COMMITTEES: Encourage sympathetic countries to speak on the incident in various UNGA Committees (e.g., Third-Human Rights; Sixth-Legal), citing the Rangoon case as an act of international terrorism deserving condemnation. It would be raised under existing agenda items such as anti-terrorism and protection of diplomats.

-- OTHER UN BODIES: Explore the possibility of raising the incident in other appropriate UN bodies, such as the Human Rights Commission.

-- NONALIGNED MOVEMENT: Sound out friendly members of the NAM to determine if they would be willing to speak out individually in the NAM to condemn this act. We cannot expect the NAM as a body to do or say anything; the lack of hard evidence, the DPRK's active participation in the NAM, and Burma's withdrawal from the NAM several years ago all make collective action implausible. Nevertheless, our appeal would make a difference to some NAM members and to the South Koreans.

Bilateral actions if There is Solid Evidence of North Korean Complicity

-- We are now identifying those countries where approaches should be made on possible cancelling of aid programs or downgrading or suspending diplomatic relations with Pyongyang.

-- Urge Japan, France and others to suspend to the maximum extent possible their countries' non-official dealings with the DPRK, in such areas as trade and extension of credit. Approaches might also be made to shipping and longshoremen's unions on a shipping boycott.

-- Work with the ROK on a world-wide public diplomacy campaign to censure the DPRK's terrorist action.

-- As part of the new VOA proposal, offer US broadcasting facilities to the ROK for improved broadcast capability to North Korea.

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Multilateral Actions if There is Solid Evidence of North Korean Complicity

-- SECURITY COUNCIL: Consult with Burma and South Korea on whether to request a meeting of the UNSC. This meeting would hear speeches by Burma, South Korea, and as many other concerned nations as possible (not just members of the Council) condemning the Rangoon atrocity. Depending on the atmosphere and tactical situation, Burma, South Korea and the USG would seek a resolution condemning the act and possibly also the DPRK. Even with unambiguous evidence of DPRK guilt, however, we could not be certain of the outcome. It would be easier to obtain a UNSC resolution condemning only the atrocity, but even in this case the outcome would not be certain. Moreover, we would not want to end up with both China and the USSR voting against us. China might feel constrained to do so even if it suspected North Korean complicity. Any UNSC resolution on this subject could include a call for sanctions against states which employ terrorism as national policy.

-- GENERAL ASSEMBLY: Encourage sympathetic countries to raise the issue in the UNGA. We do not have enough time to stimulate mention of the Rangoon atrocity in the General Debate, which concludes October 14.

-- OTHER UN AGENCIES: Explore the possibility of addressing the incident, as appropriate, in other UN agencies, including those in which North Korea has either member or observer status. North Korea is a member of the following UN agencies: FAO, IAEA, ICAO, IPU, IRCS, ITU, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO. Our preliminary assessment is that none of these organizations would be relevant to an issue like the Rangoon incident. A more appropriate UN forum would be the Human Rights Commission, which meets in Geneva February-March 1984.

-- OPPOSITION TO MEMBERSHIP: Vote against North Korean admission to international organizations to which it seeks membership. For example, Pyongyang has applied for membership to the International Maritime Organization (IMO). South Korea is already a member.

-- NONALIGNED MOVEMENT: Sound out friendly members to determine if they would try to get the Movement to make some expression of condemnation. Although still a long shot, prospects would be better if there were solid evidence of North Korean complicity.

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